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Patent

UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION
FOR

CUSTOM COMMON OBJECT

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CUSTOM COMMON OBJECT

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/457,463 filed March 24, 2003, entitled, "CUSTOM COMMON OBJECT," by Barnes-Leon et al., and which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present invention is directed to the field of data modeling, and more specifically to customization data types that can be referenced by other data objects in the data model.

BACKGROUND

[0003] An enterprise may employ various systems to manage various aspects of human resources and enterprise resources. The various systems can include Human Resource Management (HRM) systems, Employee Relationship Management (ERM) systems, Enterprise Resources Planning (ERP) systems, supply chain management (SCM) and warehouse management (WMS), and custom applications for the purpose of sharing data. Such an enterprise system is herein referred to as a multi-application integration system (MAIS). The various systems in the MAIS need to communicate data to each other. However, the users of enterprise data in the back-office typically store data in

forms usable by the back-office computerized system, which often differ significantly from the forms usable with front-office computerized systems.

[0004] Thus, when some or all aspects of enterprise data are managed by both back-office and front-office computerized systems, there is a need to synchronize the enterprise data in both computerized systems.

[0005] Thus, in order for front-office computerized systems to communicate with back-office computerized systems that are already being used, the user must manually regenerate data from the back-office computerized systems in forms usable by the front-office computerized systems. Such manual regeneration has several significant disadvantages, including: (1) it is often expensive; (2) it often requires a substantial amount of time to complete; (3) it must be repeated each time data changes in either the back-office system or the front-office system; and (4) it is prone to errors.

[0006] In view of the foregoing, an automated and efficient approach for transforming data used by a back-office computerized system for use by a front-office computerized system, or vice versa, is needed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] FIG. 1A is a high-level network diagram showing aspects of a computerized environment in which the facility operates, according to certain embodiments.

[0008] FIG. 1B is a block diagram showing some of the components typically incorporated in at least some of the computer systems and other devices on which the facility executes.

[0009] FIG. 1C illustrates a product data structure 160.

[0010] FIG. 2 shows an address custom data type element 202.

[0011] FIG. 3 shows custom data type elements associated with automobile business.

[0012] FIG. 4 shows a balance statement custom data type element 402.

[0013] FIG. 5A shows a billing profile custom data type element 502.

[0014] FIG. 5B shows custom data type element associated with bill of materials.

[0015] FIG. 6 shows a business unit custom data type element 602.

[0016] FIG. 7 shows custom data type elements associated with claims.

[0017] FIG. 8 shows custom data type elements associated with class.

[0018] FIG. 9A shows a contact-of custom data type element 902.

[0019] FIG. 9B shows a contract custom data type element 904.

[0020] FIG. 10 shows custom data type elements associated with cost.

[0021] FIG. 11 shows a credit bureau report custom data type element 1102.

[0022] FIG. 12 shows a customer-of custom data type element 1202.

[0023] FIG. 13 shows an employee-of custom data type element 1302.

[0024] FIG. 14 shows custom data type elements associated with expense.

[0025] FIG. 15 shows custom data type elements associated with finance.

[0026] FIG. 16 shows custom data type elements associated with forecast.

[0027] FIG. 17 shows custom data type elements associated with products.

[0028] FIG. 18 shows custom data type elements associated with prices.

[0029] FIG. 19 shows custom data type elements associated with purchases.

[0030] FIG. 20 shows custom data type elements associated with vehicles.

[0031] FIG. 21A shows a person custom data type element 2102.

[0032] FIG. 21B shows a policy custom data type element 2104.

[0033] FIG. 21C shows a position custom data type element 2106.

[0034] FIG. 22A shows a related-to custom data type element 2202.

[0035] FIG. 22B shows a represented-by custom data type element 2204.

[0036] FIG. 22C shows a security custom data type element 2206.

[0037] FIG. 22D shows a service request custom data type element 2208.

[0038] FIG. 22E shows a set of books custom data type element 2210.

[0039] FIG. 23 shows custom data type elements associated with orders.

[0040] FIG. 24A shows an organization custom data type element 2402.

[0041] FIG. 24B shows custom data type elements associated with party.

[0042] FIG. 25 shows custom data type elements associated with payment.

[0043] FIG. 26 shows custom data type elements associated with opportunity.

[0044] FIG. 27 shows custom data type elements associated with invoices.

[0045] FIG. 28A shows a life policy custom data type element 2802.

[0046] FIG. 28B shows a list of relationship custom data type element 2804.

[0047] FIG. 29 shows custom data type elements associated with inventory.

[0048] FIG. 30A shows a functional area custom data type element 3002.

[0049] FIG. 30B shows a holding custom data type element 3004.

[0050] FIG. 30C shows a household custom data type element 3006.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0051] All changes in the enterprise information need to be captured and made accessible to all relevant computer applications that the enterprise uses to manage various aspects of enterprise resources. Thus, a common data storage model is needed for enabling users of the relevant computer applications to have the same view of the enterprise information across the various computer applications.

[0052] According to certain embodiments, the common data storage model utilizes common objects that provide defined data structures that can be used as conduits for passing enterprise information from one computerized system to another in the enterprise multi-application integration system (MAIS). Such a data structure is a common structure that can be mapped to multiple distinct enterprise systems purchased from different vendors. Such a common data storage model is herein referred to as a common object data model or an MAIS data model.

[0053] One aspect of the common object data model is the design and utilization of "Custom" common objects. The "Custom" common objects provide

data types that can be used to capture unique customer information that is relevant to the customer's business systems.

[0054] The Custom data types may be defined in a Custom common object schema, herein referred to as "custom.xsd". Most common objects within the multi-application integration system (MAIS) data model has at least one reference to custom.xsd.

[0055] The MAIS data model provides general representations of most data objects used in day-to-day business (e.g. Sales Orders, Customer records, Product information, etc.). Due to the uniqueness of each business in the global economy, the MAIS data model, without more, usually does not meet every need of all customers. Thus, Custom common objects are provided to MAIS clients for holding, processing, and transporting the customer's unique information using the MAIS product.

[0056] The secondary problem that is associated with customer-defined data models in software applications is the adverse impact on the ability to upgrade the software when new releases come out. The design of custom common objects in custom.xsd used in MAIS solves the problem of customized data models impeding the upgrades of MAIS. Customers can customize the data model using custom.xsd, and still be able to accept updates and upgrades of the MAIS data model. This is possible because the custom.xsd will contain all customer-specific additions to the data model, and all of the other MAIS common objects simply refer to the custom.xsd to get the customer-specific

data structures. In short, the core MAIS data model is typically need not be modified by the customer because all data structure additions are made in the custom.xsd.

[0057] In contrast, in other software applications, the customizations made at the time of implementation are often tagged and logged so they can be identified and re-implement when it comes time to upgrade. However, such an approach does not significantly reduce the amount of re-work associated with upgrades. To explain, the tagging and logging simply identify how much work needs to be done, but in no way reduced the amount of the work when the software is upgraded.

[0058] Thus, custom data types are made available in each common object of MAIS. When a customer wishes to add data elements to any of the common objects used in the customer's business systems, the customer simply defines the new elements (&/or structure) in the appropriate custom data type within custom.xsd. The new definition is then available to the "calling" common object.

[0059] When enterprise information is passed from the back-office enterprise system to the front-office enterprise system, then the back-office enterprise system is referred to as the source system and the front-office enterprise system is referred to as the target system. On the other hand, when enterprise information is passed from the front-office enterprise system to the back-office enterprise system, then the front-office enterprise system is referred to as the

source system and the back-office enterprise system is referred to as the target system.

[0060] A software facility (hereafter "the facility") for automatically converting enterprise information, is described. In some embodiments, the facility converts enterprise information from a form used by the source system to a form used by the target system.

[0061] In some embodiments, such as embodiments adapted for converting enterprise information in the first source format, the facility converts enterprise information by converting the enterprise information that is in the first source format into an intermediate format. The intermediate format includes a plurality of custom data type elements that are adapted for capturing unique customer information that are relevant to the customer's business systems. The intermediate format is then used to convert the enterprise information into the target format.

[0062] By performing such conversions, embodiments of the facility enable a user of a first computerized system who has stored enterprise information in a first format for use by the first computerized system to readily make the stored enterprise information available for use in a second computerized system that utilizes a second format in a cost-efficient and time-efficient manner.

[0063] FIG. 1A is a high-level network diagram showing aspects of a typical hardware environment in which the facility operates. FIG. 1A shows a source

system 110, a target system 130, an integration server 120 and a network 150.

Source system 110 stores enterprise information in a source format. There may be more than one source system. Target system 130 stores enterprise information in a target format. There may be more than one target system.

[0064] The facility (not shown) converts some or all the enterprise information that is in the source format into the target format by using an intermediate format of the enterprise information. In certain embodiments, such conversions are performed with the aid of one or more other computer systems, such as integration server system 120. Components of the facility may reside on and/or execute on any combination of these computer systems, and intermediate results from the conversion may similarly reside on any combination of these computer systems.

[0065] The computer systems shown in FIG. 1A are connected via network 150, which may use a variety of different networking technologies, including wired, guided or line-of-sight optical, and radio frequency networking. In some embodiments, the network includes the public switched telephone network. Network connections established via the network may be fully-persistent, session-based, or intermittent, such as packet-based. While the facility typically operates in an environment such as is shown in FIG. 1A and described above, those skilled in the art will appreciate the facility may also operate in a wide variety of other environments.

[0066] FIG. 1B is a block diagram showing some of the components typically incorporated in at least some of the computer systems and other devices on which the facility executes, including some or all of the server and client computer systems shown in FIG. 1A. These computer systems and devices 100 may include one or more central processing units ("CPUs") 101 for executing computer programs; a computer memory 102 for storing programs and data -- including data structures -- while they are being used; a persistent storage device 103, such as a hard drive, for persistently storing programs and data; a computer-readable media drive 104, such as a CD-ROM drive, for reading programs and data stored on a computer-readable medium; and a network connection 105 for connecting the computer system to other computer systems, such as via the Internet, to exchange programs and/or data -- including data structures. While computer systems configured as described above are typically used to support the operation of the facility, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the facility may be implemented using devices of various types and configurations, and having various components.

[0067] It will be understood by those skilled in the art that the facility may transform enterprise information from a number of different source systems and from a number of different source software packages to a number of target systems and/or to a number of target software packages.

[0068] The intermediate data structures used by the facility include "custom" common data structures. Custom common data structures are used for

capturing unique customer information and that can be referenced by other intermediate data structures. For example, a product data structure in the common object model may include a "custom data" element. The custom data element may be used by the customer to define additional data fields associated with the customer's product, as one example.

[0069] FIG. 1C illustrates a product data structure 160. Product data structure 160 includes a related product line element 162, a list of price type element 164, a list of related inventory location element 166, a list of related product element 168, a list of related business unit element 170 and a "product custom data" element 172. product data structure 160 refers to the Custom common object schema through the product custom data element 172.

[0070] In the event that the customer wishes to add additional data fields to product data structure 160, the customer may do so by simply modifying the product custom data type in the Custom common object schema.

[0071] Custom common data structures include one or more elements selected from a group comprising: an application element, a fault handler input element, a fault handler output element, a fault transformer input element, a fault transformer output element, a list of application instance element, a list of application type element, a list of ID cross-reference element, a list of ID cross-reference data element, a list of message definition element, a list of message text element, a list of value cross-reference element, and a list of value cross-reference data element, a message element, a message set element, an

activity type element, an address type element, an alternate ID type element, a communication data type element, a data cleansing data type element, and a payment card type element.

[0072] FIG. 2 shows an address custom data type element 202.

[0073] FIG. 3 shows custom data type elements associated with automobile business. The custom data type elements include an auto deal custom data type element 302, an auto policy custom data type element 304, an auto sales history custom data type element 306, an auto service history custom data type element 308, an auto service job custom data type element 310, and an auto service repair order custom data type element 312.

[0074] FIG. 4 shows a balance statement custom data type element 402.

[0075] FIG. 5A shows a billing profile custom data type element 502.

[0076] FIG. 5B shows custom data type element associated with bill of materials. The custom data type elements include a bill of material component custom data type element 504, and a bill of material custom data type element 506.

[0077] FIG. 6 shows a business unit custom data type element 602.

[0078] FIG. 7 shows a claim custom data type element 702, and a claim payment custom data type element 704.

[0079] FIG. 8 shows a class attribute custom data type element 802, a class attribute value custom data type element 804, and a class custom data custom data type element 806.

[0080] FIG. 9A shows a contact-of custom data type element 902.

[0081] FIG. 9B shows a contract custom data type element 904.

[0082] FIG. 10 shows a cost list custom data type element 1002, and a cost list line custom data type element 1004.

[0083] FIG. 11 shows a credit bureau report custom data type element 1102.

[0084] FIG. 12 shows a customer-of custom data type element 1202.

[0085] FIG. 13 shows an employee-of custom data type element 1302.

[0086] FIG. 14 shows an expense custom data type element 1402, and an expense line custom data type element 1404.

[0087] FIG. 15 shows a financial account custom data type element 1502, a financial applicant custom data type element 1504, a financial application account custom data type element 1506, a financial application collateral custom data type element 1508, a financial application custom data type element 1510, a financial application funding source custom data type element 1512, and a financial statement custom data type element 1514.

[0088] FIG. 16 shows a forecast custom data type element 1602, and forecast line detail custom data type element 1604.

[0089] FIG. 17 shows a product catalog custom data type element 1702, a product catalog line item custom data type element 1704, a product custom data type element 1706, a product inventory location custom data type element 1708, a product line custom data type element 1710, a product price custom

data type element 1712, and an installed product custom data type element 1714.

[0090] FIG. 18 shows a price list custom data type element 1802, and a price list line custom data type element 1804.

[0091] FIG. 19 shows a purchase order custom data type element 1902, and a purchase order line item custom data type element 1904.

[0092] FIG. 20 shows a vehicle anti theft device custom data type element 2002, a vehicle custom data type element 2004, and a vehicle option custom data type element 2006.

[0093] FIG. 21A shows a person custom data type element 2102.

[0094] FIG. 21B shows a policy custom data type element 2104.

[0095] FIG. 21C shows a position custom data type element 2106.

[0096] FIG. 22A shows a related-to custom data type element 2202.

[0097] FIG. 22B shows a represented-by custom data type element 2204.

[0098] FIG. 22C shows a security custom data type element 2206.

[0099] FIG. 22D shows a service request custom data type element 2208.

[00100] FIG. 22E shows a set of books custom data type element 2210.

[00101] FIG. 23 shows an order custom data type element 2303, an order line custom data type element 2304, and an order type custom data type element 2306.

[00102] FIG. 24A shows an organization custom data type element 2402.

- [00103] FIG. 24B shows a party authentication custom data type element 2404, and a party custom data type element 2406.
- [00104] FIG. 25 shows a payment custom data type element 2502, a payment line custom data type element 2504, a payment method custom data type element 2506, a payment term custom data type element, 2508 and a payment type custom data type element 2510.
- [00105] FIG. 26 shows an opportunity custom data type element 2603, an opportunity notes custom data type element 2604, and an opportunity revenue item custom data type element 2606.
- [00106] FIG. 27 shows an invoice custom data type element 2702, an invoice line custom data type element 2704, an invoice plan custom data type element 2706, and an invoice type custom data type element 2708.
- [00107] FIG. 28A shows a life policy custom data type element 2802.
- [00108] FIG. 28B shows a list of relationship custom data type element 2804.
- [00109] FIG. 29 shows an inventory balance custom data type element 2902, an inventory balance list of balance balance custom data type element 2904, an inventory transaction custom data type element 2906, and an inventory location custom data type element 2908.
- [00110] FIG. 30A shows a functional area custom data type element 3002.
- [00111] FIG. 30B shows a holding custom data type element 3004.
- [00112] FIG. 30C shows a household custom data type element 3006.

[00113] It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the above-described facility may be straightforwardly adapted or extended in various ways. For example, the facility may be used to transform various other kinds of enterprise information, and may be used to transform enterprise information between a variety of other formats.

[00114] In the foregoing specification, embodiments of the invention have been described with reference to numerous specific details that may vary from implementation to implementation. Thus, the sole and exclusive indicator of what the invention is and what is intended by the applicants to be the invention, is the set of claims that issue from this application, in the specific form in which such claims issue, including any subsequent correction. Any express definitions set forth herein for terms contained in such claims shall govern the meaning of such terms as used in the claims. Hence, no limitation, element, property, feature, advantage or attribute that is not expressly recited in a claim should limit the scope of such claim in any way. The specification and drawings are, accordingly, to be regarded in an illustrative rather than a restrictive sense.